

The Family

A LOVE SONG.

By Henry Van Dyke.

I envy every flower that blows
Beside the pathway where she goes,
And every bird that sings to her,
And every breeze that brings to her
The fragrance of the rose.

I envy every poet's rhyme
That moves her heart at eventime,
And every tree that wears for her
Its brightest bloom, and bears for her
The fruitage of its prime.

I envy every Southern night
That paves her path with moonbeams
white,
And silvers all the leaves for her,
And in their shadow weaves for her
A dream of dear delight.

I envy none whose love requires
Of her a gift, a task that tires:
I only long to live to her,
I only ask to give to her
All that her heart desires.
—The Century Magazine for March.

THE STRATEGY OF GREAT GRANDMA.

"Well," said Great Grandma, breathlessly, "go on."

"Let me see," began Lisbeth, thinking a little.

Lisbeth was a little slender girl of fourteen or fifteen, with thick braids of auburn hair and thoughtful brown eyes. She was very fond of Great Grandma, and Great Grandma was very fond of her. She was telling Great Grandma just now about the missionary from India she had heard at the church the day before. The generations that lay between the two did not interfere in the least with their affection. The slender little girl went to see the white-haired, bent old lady every day, telling her all her plans and what she had been doing. Great Grandma did the same. Even her daughter, gray-haired and portly now, or her granddaughter, pretty, plump Mrs. Abbott, were not the comfort and delight to her that Lisbeth was.

All at once Lisbeth exclaimed enthusiastically, "Why, Great Grandma, this is the very prettiest quilt you ever made. What pattern is it?"

"It's a grape vine pattern," returned Great Grandma a trifle absently. "Yes, it is pretty, but go on. What did the missionary look like?"

"She was pretty," said Lisbeth, enthusiastically. "She had gray eyes and her complexion was a little tanned, for it's awful hot over in India, and she's been there fourteen years; but she had the sweetest smile and the loveliest teeth, and she was dressed just like the women dress over there, to show us. Red waist and skirt, a kind of drapery fastened on her head, moccasins on her feet, beads and tinsel around her neck and on her arms"—

"Poor heathen!" exclaimed Great Grandma, compassionately.

"She said, too," went on Lisbeth, "that

it only takes three cents a day to feed a person in India, and that ten cents will do, oh, such a lot! She said she had awful hard work to get money to come over here, because all she earned she put in her mission school, but some kind lady who knew how she felt about it gave her the money for her passage. She said she knew that American people were good and generous, and that if we knew about starving India we would help. And then she went on to tell about it. Oh! Great Grandma, it was awful, the things they do over there, and they think it is all right, and the only thing that will stop it is Christianity. Those little Hindu wives of ten and twelve are so pitiable, and if they happen to be widows, why every one looks upon them as 'accursed,' and they are made terrible slaves of. She says sometimes they will find at the gates of the mission school a poor little wife, so beaten and abused she can not stand, left there by a cruel husband or mother or mother-in-law to die. And the missionaries take her and heal her."

"It's a grand work," said Great Grandma, thoughtfully. "I've always wanted to do something for missions."

"Lisbeth," she said suddenly, "what would you think if I gave this quilt to missions? When people know it was made by an old woman of ninety-four, don't you think some one would buy it?"

"I am sure of it," replied Lisbeth, promptly.

"Well, now, what I want you to do is to take it over to the mission circle right after school. It meets this afternoon at Mrs. Grant's. Don't you tell your mother or your grandma a word about it. It's just between you and me. I want the circle to sell it, and every cent it brings shall go to the missionary."

Lisbeth took the quilt up in all the glory of its innumerable stitches so beautifully executed, its crimson grapes, its green leaves.

"It's awful pretty, Great Grandma," she said again, "but won't Mother care? I heard her say she was to have this quilt."

"I never said so," replied Great Grandma, quickly. "If she thinks she's going to get it, I expect your Grandma told her. This is going to be set aside as Samuel was, to the Lord. I've never done the good I wanted to, and it would be a sight of comfort to me to feel that before I fold my hands in my last sleep, I did something 'pleasing unto him.'"

"Then I think you ought to do it," returned Lisbeth, promptly. "Right after school I'll come after the quilt."

Great Grandma lived with her daughter, Mrs. Abigail Humphreys. Mrs. Abigail was past sixty herself, but like Moses of old, her eye was not dimmed, nor her natural force abated. She still ruled over her household with the same capable hand she had manifested in her younger days. She had a great faculty of getting work out of everybody, and Great Grandma at ninety-four was not permitted to eat the bread of idleness, even if she had wanted to, which she didn't. But she did get a little weary of Abigail's planning for the spare hours. It

was "Mother, patch this, darn this, or fix that," all the time.

Just then Mrs. Abigail came in.

"Why, Mother," she exclaimed, "your quilt is done, I see! It is by far the prettiest one you ever made. I am glad Dora is to have it. How pleased she will be!"

But Great Grandma did not reply. She was industriously clipping off the loose threads, and in a minute or two her daughter went away.

True to her word, promptly after school Lisbeth called for the quilt. Mrs. Abigail was out, but Great Grandma was sitting in her rocking chair waiting. "I've got it all ready, Lisbeth," she said joyously. "Now you take it over to the circle just as fast as you can. You give it to the president yourself, and tell her I said I wanted them to sell it and give what it brings to missions. It won't probably be a great deal, but it's all I've got that I can give."

Lisbeth obeyed. She burst into the circle then in session with the large bundle.

"Great Grandma has sent you a quilt," she began, "and she wants you to sell it and give the money to missions. She says she always wanted to do something more than she has done and she thought she would give you this. I told her what the missionary over at the church said and she wanted to hear every word. She made me tell some of it over again."

A sweet-faced lady sitting next the president smiled at the eager, brown-eyed girl.

"How old is your Great Grandma?" she asked.

"Ninety-four," said Lisbeth.

"Ninety-four and she is able still to do such beautiful work! I call that quilt wonderful."

The strange lady had taken up the quilt and was studying it. The circle had all gathered around it, too. Lisbeth looked at the strange lady admiringly. She looked so sweet and stately and good. All at once the lady spoke.

"I'll give fifty dollars for this quilt," she said quietly. "It is a most exquisite piece of hand work. I have a room at home that I keep all such treasures in—and you say she is ninety-four?"

A few minutes later Lisbeth burst into Great Grandma's room.

"It's gone, Great Grandma," she said breathlessly. "A rich lady visiting the Parkers took it and she gave, oh, Great Grandma, what do you think? she gave—fifty dollars. She said it was just wonderful you could do such beautiful work at ninety-four. And the circle is so pleased. Just as soon as she bought it the ladies all took out their pocket-books and raised ten dollars more; some of 'em cried, too. And they're going to send it right over to India."

"Praise the Lord!" said Great Grandma, reverently.

At that moment Mrs. Abigail opened the door. "Mother," she began, "I want to get the quilt. Dora has come for it."

Lisbeth flushed half-guiltily, but Great Grandma looked up quite calm and with a new dignity.